

## **Three Point Lighting**

**Three-point lighting** is a standard method used in visual media such as theatre, video, film, still photography and computer-generated imagery. By using three separate positions, the photographer can illuminate the shot's subject (such as a person) however desired, while also controlling (or eliminating entirely) the shading and shadows produced by direct lighting.

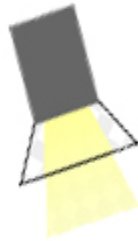
The **key light**, as the name suggests, shines directly upon the subject and serves as its principal illuminator; more than anything else, the strength, color and angle of the key determines the shot's overall lighting design.

The **fill light** also shines on the subject, but from a side angle relative to the key and is often placed at a lower position than the key (about at the level of the subject's face). It balances the key by illuminating shaded surfaces, such as the shadow cast by a person's nose upon the rest of the face. It is usually softer and less bright than the key light (up to half), and related more to a flood. Not using a fill at all can result in stark contrasts (due to shadows) across the subject's surface, depending upon the key light's harshness. Sometimes, as in low-key lighting, this is a deliberate effect, but shots intended to look more natural and less stylistic require a fill.

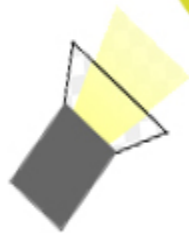
In some situations a photographer can use a reflector (such as a piece of white cardstock mounted off-camera, or even a white-painted wall) as a fill light instead of an actual lamp. Reflecting and redirecting the key light's rays back upon the subject from a different angle can cause a softer, subtler effect than using another lamp.

The **back light** shines on the subject from behind, often (but not necessarily) to one side or the other. It gives the subject a rim of light, serving to separate the subject from the background and highlighting contours.

**BACK LIGHT  
PROVIDES DEPTH  
BY GIVING A "RIM"  
(OR "HALO" OF LIGHT**



**KEY LIGHT  
THE PRIMARY ILLUMINATION**



**FILL LIGHT  
ELIMINATES SHADOWS**



## SHOOTING IN SUNLIGHT

NEVER SHOOT WITH THE SUN  
BEHIND THE SUBJECT

